

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL RESOURCES

MARYLAND OYSTER RESTORATION
AND AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT PLAN
PUBLIC HEARING COMMENTS

HELD AT

ANNE ARUNDEL COMMUNITY COLLEGE
PASCAL CENTER FOR PERFORMING ARTS
101 COLLEGE PARKWAY
ARNOLD, MARYLAND 21012

ON

WEDNESDAY, JULY 7, 2010

FROM

6:10 P.M. TO 7:00 P.M.

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MODERATOR: MARTIN GARY, MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES, FISHERIES SERVICES

REPORTED BY: LINDA JOYCE KRALLER, NOTARY PUBLIC IN
AND FOR THE STATE OF MARYLAND.

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MR. GARY: So these public comments will be on
3 the public record. They'll be recorded and posted to
4 our website media via a pdf transcript. And we had a
5 sign-in sheet and we have two members of the audience
6 that asked to speak and one maybe. And if somebody, we
7 have a small group here tonight, so if you change your
8 mind later on we'll accept that. So the first speaker,
9 and, again, we're going to ask him to come up to the
10 stage, is Bill Goldsborough.

11 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Thank you, Marty, and Tom,
12 and everybody associated with this Plan. It's a little
13 daunting, the whole theory here but let me just give a
14 few thoughts about my view of the Plan. I am a senior
15 scientist with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and I
16 represent the Foundation on this.

17 And, in short, I'm here to say that we fully
18 support this Plan. On a little bit more of a personal
19 note, I want to say that I've been involved in
20 fisheries issues representing the Foundation since the
21 mid-80s. And I have never seen a proposed action

1 that's more thorough, more well thought out, more
2 grounded in science, more fully bedded with
3 stakeholders than this one. And I mean that sincerely.

4 So I compliment everybody that's had any
5 involvement in it. I was going to list some of the
6 things that I've been aware of over the last several
7 years that have gotten us to this point and we've been
8 involved in most of them. But Tom did list most of
9 that from VIS right on through to this recent very
10 extensive stakeholder involvement process.

11 It's really been astounding as far as I'm
12 concerned. There was one thing that was not mentioned
13 that I am particularly interested in and thought it was
14 really above and beyond even that, and that was what I
15 don't think a lot of people are aware of, is that the
16 Department actually contracted with some outside
17 experts and one a world-renowned fishery scientist,
18 formerly of the University of Maryland, a former DNR
19 fishery scientist now retired, to do some extensive
20 analysis of historic catch and survey data to further
21 inform this Plan.

1 And so they didn't enter into this in -- I
2 think it's fair to say. From my stand point, I think,
3 maybe one of the things that recommends it the most is
4 that it really is balanced. It really does try to take
5 into account a variety of different objectives for
6 Maryland. It's not just about "Let's save the oysters
7 for the oysters sake." From the stand point of an
8 environmental group, we might, one might think,
9 approach it that way and seek to have, say, a
10 moratorium put on and have that be a sole objective.

11 But that's not where we're coming from. We
12 think there are important economic objectives as well
13 as ecological ones. And, yet, we think as this Plan
14 fairly does, the way we've been going about that is
15 broken, that the status quo does not work. And over
16 the last six months, the Bay Foundation itself has been
17 doing research on stats of oysters and the major issues
18 confronting oyster restoration.

19 And we just, may have heard, we just released
20 our report yesterday about that. And our work, as
21 captured in that report, which you can find on our

1 website, reaches very similar conclusions. And that's
2 no surprised to me in the extensive work that was done
3 by the Department and others on this. But that
4 sanctuaries actually are critical for restoring the
5 oyster and some of the genetic reasons Tom mentioned,
6 but there are lots of others, as well.

7 But, also, for economic reasons. That, in
8 fact, one study found that establishing a restored
9 oyster reef as a sanctuary over time would actually
10 yield a more economic value for the fish that it
11 produces that can then be caught than if you just left
12 it to be harvested as a public bar, harvest oysters as
13 a public bar.

14 And that's to say nothing about the benefits
15 of the filter feeding of the oysters or the
16 reproduction of the oysters that, like, enhance nearby
17 harvest farms. So that's just one thing. But I do
18 think, therefore, that expanding the sanctuary program
19 in a well thought out and scienced-based way, the way
20 this Plan proposes, is good for not only the ecological
21 side of things but, also, the economic side.

1 I think it's good for the fishery in the long
2 run. And the other thing that's, of course, related to
3 the economic subject, is the promotion of aquaculture.
4 CBF has been running a demonstration in oyster
5 aquaculture operation in Virginia for the last ten
6 years for the purpose of actually trying to show that
7 it can be done and can be profitable. And we have
8 shown that and there have been a number of private
9 oyster farms that have sprung up in Virginia in recent
10 years directly based on that model.

11 So we think that there's tremendous potential
12 in Maryland. We've outlined that in the report that we
13 just completed, as well. So I like the concept of
14 phasing in aquaculture. It's not something you can
15 start immediately. You can't just spring up a new
16 industry.

17 I encourage the idea of streamlining
18 permitting, of providing training, of providing low-
19 interest loans or even grants to people interested in
20 getting into it because, I think, there is tremendous
21 potential for this, both for one -- for others that

1 might be interested in it.

2 And, I think, it's better for oysters, as
3 well, because it puts more of them in the water and it
4 puts more than one open spawn that can filter that
5 could eventually provide habitat. And, of course, it
6 takes the pressure off the wild stocks. So I
7 compliment the Department and fully support the Plan.
8 Thank you.

9 MR. GARY: Thank you, Bill. Our next speaker
10 is Mr. Paul Slunt. Paul? And, Paul, if you could
11 state your affiliation if you have any or if you're
12 just a concerned citizen.

13 MR. SLUNT: I'm not affiliated with anyone.
14 I'm just an interested citizen. I have a little
15 background but not in oysters, specifically. I spent
16 my whole career with the State working on all the
17 rivers, the Bay, the ocean, to try to bring them up to
18 the level of cleanliness that the good Lord put us
19 with.

20 And I concentrate don the very small parts,
21 the nutrients, the phosphorous, the nitrogens, the

1 chemistry of it, the algae, the modeling, we worked
2 with every tool with had. And then as time went on,
3 the Bay has never seen quite an improvement, I mean,
4 back where it had been a long time ago, back in the
5 '50s and before.

6 And as I sat in-house as a retired --
7 engineer, was my real aim, I started to think about
8 what was the most important thing the Bay, what could
9 changes things. Thirty years, not any improvement.
10 What's going on? Billions of dollars. And the thing
11 that hit me was the oyster.

12 The oyster is the major filtering mechanism
13 in the Bay. It cleanses the waters. The Bay, it's
14 said, used to be cleansed in six days by the oyster
15 population. It couldn't be cleansed in 10,000 years, I
16 don't believe, with the oyster population we have now.
17 The waters in the Bay don't move in and out in a day.

18 They stay there for an extended period of
19 time. And so I have concluded that we have to get
20 basic oyster population up to a pretty good level,
21 maybe 50, 60 times what it is now so they can perform

1 their function of cleansing the Bay.

2 And the Bay is so important it isn't funny.
3 All the rivers, 33 of them, tide rivers. That means
4 the tide comes in, the Bay waters come in. And those
5 waters have to be clean when they come in or the tidal
6 rivers can't be clean.

7 So I don't know how all this can be utilized
8 -- but whatever plan is adopted or whatever procedures
9 are taken in the future, I would hope that we can have
10 some increasing level of base oyster population that
11 can occur in the Bay itself so that we can cleanse the
12 waters the way they used to be.

13 And, I think, it's so critical, I have to
14 say. Thank you.

15 MR. GARY: Thank you, Paul. Mr. Dave
16 Sikorski, did you want to speak?

17 MR. SIKORSKI: No.

18 MR. GARY: Those are all the speakers we have
19 listed. This is a small gathering. Would anyone else,
20 at this time, like to offer public comment?

21 (Whereupon, there was no response.)

1 MR. GARY: All right. Then with that, there
2 is an additional mechanism if you wouldn't want to come
3 up here and formally offer it. In the back of your
4 package, hopefully everybody has the large packet. If
5 you don't there should be sufficient copies out back.

6 And the very last page has a form. That form
7 can be filled out and dropped off here tonight and
8 we'll take a couple extra minutes. Our staff will be
9 around, or you can fax it in, or you can mail it in to
10 us. But that's an opportunity if you didn't want to
11 jump up on the microphone, and still get your thoughts
12 in.

13 Again, the major purpose of this public
14 hearing is to make sure that you were heard. So take
15 the opportunity, if you like, to go ahead and fill that
16 out and provide that to us. And our staff will be
17 around. Be happy to talk with you outside of the
18 meeting. And with that, this public hearing is
19 adjourned. Thank you for attending.

20 (Whereupon, at 7:00 p.m., the above-
21 entitled public hearing was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY

I, Linda Joyce Kraller, the officer before whom the foregoing testimony was taken, do hereby certify that the testimony of said parties was taken by me by stenomask means and thereafter reduced to typewriting by me or under my direction; that said testimony is a true record of the testimony given by said parties; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which this testimony is taken; and, further, that I am not a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.

This certification is expressly withdrawn and denied upon the disassembly or photocopying of the foregoing transcript of the proceedings or any part thereof, including exhibits, unless said disassembly or photocopying is done by the undersigned court reporter and/or under the auspices of Hunt Reporting Company, and the signature and original seal is attached thereto.

LINDA JOYCE KRALLER
Notary Public in and for
the State of Maryland

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January 3, 2014

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